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Subject: Paper submission to Indian Journal of Medical Ethics: **Gendered vulnerabilities of women during Covid-19: Limitations of the current data capture systems and response**

Dear Editor,

We are happy to submit our manuscript ‘Gendered vulnerabilities of women during Covid-19: Limitations of the current data capture systems and response’, for review and submission to IJME. Though a lot has been written recently about the COVID-19 pandemic and its varied facets, concerns of the gendered impact of the pandemic and the attendant crisis have been less commented upon in the public health discourse. In this paper we choose to highlight the gendered vulnerabilities of women during COVID-19. Within this we look at the epidemiological picture emerging of the disease as seen from sex disaggregated data, as also look at specific vulnerabilities of women on account of occupation, reproductive health and patriarchal gender-power relations. A major aspect we focus on is the lack of systematic and comprehensive data, especially age-sex and gender disaggregated data embedded within other social group and demographic characteristics, which substantially hampers a comprehensive understanding of risk factors for women. We use experiences from past pandemics such as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and Zika Virus Disease (ZVD) to show that lack of data, especially sex disaggregated data has prevented understanding the impact of the pandemic on women’s health e.g. increased risks faced by nurses; neglect of impact on pregnant women and the pregnancy and the additional risks faced by women due to the disruption in the regular functioning of the health system. Lack of data makes it difficult to make a strong case against the currently gender blind approaches to the pandemic on the one hand, while lack of a strong case continues to marginalize the urgent needs of comprehensive data systems to be in place in order for a gender responsive approach to the pandemic. We believe that a focus on this particular foundational aspect necessary to provide a robust, timely and gender sensitive and specific response would make this paper an important contribution in the Indian context.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

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